

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-05 /076 W

-----107643 132038Z /66

R 131949Z OCT 77

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0265

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 30050

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PROP, VN, US

SUBJECT: FRENCH VIEWS ON VIETNAM

REFS: A. VIENTIANE 1195

B. MOSCOW 14616

C. STATE 242569

D. VIENTIANE 1335

1. SUMMARY: EMBOFFS MET RECENTLY WITH DOPFFER, QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR LAOS, CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM, AND DEFAY, VIETNAM COUNTRY DESK OFFICER, FOR GENERAL REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS IN VIETNAM. AS IN REF A, THE GENERAL IMPRESSION OF FRANCO-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS GIVEN IS THAT THE FRENCH ARE FRUSTRATED BY THEIR INABILITY TO PROCEED MORE RAPIDLY IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH THE VIETNAMESE, AND THAT ONCE MATTERS ARE DECIDED EN PRINCIPE BETWEEN THE FRENCH AND VIETNAMESE, DELAYS OF SEVERAL YEARS ARE TO BE EXPECTED BEFORE ANYTHING CONCRETE IS ACHIEVED. END SUMMARY.

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2. ECONOMICS: DEFAY NOTED THAT THE FRENCH REACHED AN AGREEMENT WITH THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT AS EARLY AS 1975 REGARDING THE HANDLING OF FRENCH ASSETS WHICH WERE FROZEN IN VIETNAM AFTER THE FALL OF SAIGON. TO DATE, HOWEVER, THE VIETNAMESE HAVE FAILED TO PROCEED BEYOND THE "AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE", AND NONE OF THE SUPPOSED- LY UNFROZEN ASSETS HAVE ACTUALLY BEEN FREED -- NOT

EVEN DEFROSTED. EACH TIME THE FRENCH FEEL THEY HAVE ACHIEVED SOME POSITIVE AGREEMENT TO ACTUALLY FREEING THESE ASSETS, THE VIETNAMESE INTRODUCE ANOTHER BARRIER TO THE ACTUAL IMPLEMENTATION OF ANY ACTION. FRENCH BUSINESSMEN SUFFER IDENTICAL FRUSTRATIONS, AND THEY FIND THAT DEALING WITH THE VIETNAMESE IS EVEN MORE DIFFICULT THAN DEALING WITH THE CHINESE. DEFAY THOUGHT THAT THERE COULD NEVER BE SUFFICIENT EXACTITUDE IN CONTRACTS OR BUSINESS OFFERS TO SATISFY VIETNAMESE OFFICIALDOM. DOPFFER INDICATED THAT THE SLOW PACE OF ECONOMIC EXPANSION OF FRENCH EXCHANGES WITH VIETNAM MIGHT BE ATTRIBUTED SOMEWHAT TO LOWER ESTIMATES FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, WHICH HAVE CAUSED HANOI TO RAISE THE PRIORITY OF IMPORTS TO AID AGRICULTURE. SUCH REDEFINITION OF GOALS HAS PRODUCED CONSIDERABLE DISORGANIZATION. (QUAI SOURCES COMMENTS WERE MORE RESTRAINED THAN THOSE REPORTED IN REF A.)

3. BORDER PROBLEMS: DEFAY SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THE PRC AND VIETNAM HAVE BEEN CONDUCTING REGULAR TALKS ON THE STATUS OF THE DISPUTED ISLANDS SINCE MID-1975. HE KNEW NOTHING ABOUT POSSIBLE TALKS BETWEEN THE PRC AND VIETNAM ON THEIR COMMON BORDER. THE PROBLEM OF KAMPUCHEAN MILITARY INCURSIONS ACROSS THE BORDER INTO VIETNAM HAS BECOME OF SERIOUS CONCERN TO VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES. ACCORDING TO DEFAY, THE VIETNAMESE HAVE CONFIDENTIAL

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BEEN COMPLAINING TO THEIR EAST EUROPEAN DIPLOMATIC CONTACTS ABOUT THE INCREASED LEVEL OF FIGHTING ON THE KAMPUCHEAN BORDER. DEFAY SAID THAT EAST EUROPEAN DIPLOMATS HAVE BEEN TELLING HIM THAT VIETNAM NOW CONSIDERS KAMPUCHEA TO BE AN "AGRESSOR", A TERM NOT FORMERLY USED IN THIS CONTEXT. THE FRENCH HAD NOTED THAT THE HUNGARIAN PRESS HAD PRINTED THE SRV VERSION OF THE CONFLICT. DOPFFER INTERPRETED THE VIETNAMESE PROTESTS TO THE EAST EUROPEANS AS WELL DEFINED PROPAGANDA DESIGNED TO REDUCE THE LEVEL OF KAMPUCHEAN MILITARY ACTIVITY ON THE BORDER.

4. US-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS: DEFAY SAID THAT THE VIETNAMESE EMBASSY IN PARIS HAD INFORMED HIM THAT THERE WOULD BE ANOTHER ROUND OF TALKS WITH THE US SIDE BEFORE THE END OF THIS YEAR. THE VIETNAMESE CAREFULLY AVOIDED IDENTIFYING THE VENUE FOR THE NEXT ROUND OF

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 30050

TALKS WITH THE US. DEFAY SPENT SOME TIME WITH THE
VIETNAMESE FOREIGN MINISTER DURING HIS OCTOBER 4-6 STOP
IN PARIS. DEFAY WOULD ONLY SAY THAT THE SRV UNDER-
STANDS ABSTRACTLY THE US EXECUTIVE/LEGISLATIVE
SYSTEM, BUT HE DOUBTS THAT IT WILL EVER BELIEVE THAT
THE US EXECUTIVE CANNOT FIND SOME WAY TO HAVE ITS OWN
WAY WITH CONGRESS CONCERNING AID TO VIETNAM AS PART
OF THE NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS.

5. INDOCHINESE REFUGEE COMMUNITY IN FRANCE: DEFAY
SAID THAT THE FRENCH HAVE CONCLUDED THAT EXPLOITATION
OF REFUGEES ARRIVING IN FRANCE FROM INDOCHINA HAS
PROVIDED LITTLE INFORMATION REGARDING DEVELOPMENTS
THERE. HE NOTED THAT VERY FEW, IF ANY, OF THESE
REFUGEES APPEAR TO HAVE HAD ANY USEFUL ACCESS FOR SOME
TIME PRIOR TO THEIR DEPARTURE FROM INDOCHINA.

6. THE FUTURE: DEFAY SAID THAT THE FRENCH ARE
PUSHING HARD TO REGULARIZE THE STATUS OF THEIR
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CONSULATE GENERAL IN SAIGON. HE SAID THE MATTER WAS
RAISED MOST RECENTLY DURING THE VISIT OF THE VIETNAMESE

FOREIGN MINISTER LAST WEEK. THE VIETNAMESE CONTINUE
TO SHOW SYMPATHY AND APPRECIATION FOR FRENCH INTERESTS;
THEY LIKEWISE DO NOTHING TO CHANGE THE STATUS QUO.
HARTMAN

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